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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4173rd meeting of the Security Council, held on 17 July 2000, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Sierra Leone", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the decision taken by the Secretary-General to mount a military operation by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to relieve its surrounded peacekeepers and military observers at Kailahun. It expresses its satisfaction at the successful outcome of the operation, with the minimum of casualties among United Nations personnel. The Security Council expresses its admiration for the professionalism, determination and robustness displayed by all the UNAMSIL forces involved in this difficult and dangerous operation, and for the leadership and skill of the Force Commander, General Jetley, under whose personal command it was carried out.

"The Security Council believes that the hostile stance taken by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) towards UNAMSIL personnel at Kailahun had become intolerable. It fully concurs with the Secretary-General's assessment in this regard. It is firmly of the view that, after over two months' denial of freedom of movement by the RUF; the exhaustion of intensive diplomatic and political efforts; and the recent decision by the RUF to impede the resupply to Kailahun, the Force Commander, under these circumstances, had no choice but to take resolute action to restore the security and freedom of movement of UNAMSIL personnel, as authorized under the mandate of UNAMSIL.

"The Security Council pays tribute to the forces of the Indian contingent of UNAMSIL, who took the lead in the execution of the operation. The Council expresses its profound condolences to the family of the Indian sergeant, Krishna Kumar, who gave his life in the cause of peace. It also expresses its sympathies to those who were wounded. The Security Council commends equally the critical role played by the Nigerian and Ghanaian contingents who provided essential flank and rear support, without which the operation would not have been possible; as well as the contribution of the force as a whole. The Council also expresses its appreciation to the United Kingdom for the valuable logistical support provided. The cooperation, coherence and sense of common purpose displayed by all concerned should be

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considered an example of the very best in United Nations multilateral peacekeeping.

"The Council believes that there is now a firm foundation on which UNAMSIL can build as it continues to implement its mandate and work towards a lasting peaceful settlement to the conflict in Sierra Leone. While noting these positive developments, the Council recognizes that there is still much to be done, and expresses its full support to UNAMSIL in its efforts to implement its mandate."